

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 21, 2021

President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Vice President Kamala Harris
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

President Biden and Vice President Harris:

We applaud your administration's focus and commitment to working families, including your proposal for 14 weeks of emergency paid leave in the American Rescue Plan and your commitment to create a national paid leave plan that includes up to 12 weeks of comprehensive paid leave in your Build Back Better plan. Access to paid leave is a critical issue for all families, but this need is especially dire for families of color and the Latino community because of existing racial disparities in healthcare, wages, economic security, and access to family and medical leave.

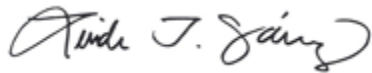
As you are aware, the US is the only industrialized nation that has no federal paid family leave policy. A staggering 113 million workers in America don't have access to a single day of family and medical leave. As a result, the cost and responsibility of supporting families falls disproportionately on those who can least afford it: women, people of color, and low-wage working people. While paid family and medical leave would benefit all workers, it's impact on Latino workers and their families is even greater.

Not only do Latino workers often hold low-wage jobs that don't provide paid leave benefits, but they are also more likely to stop working to care for their aging family members. While the existing Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) allows some workers to take 12 weeks of unpaid leave in some jobs, the FMLA doesn't cover 40 percent of today's workforce. Among Latino workers, the disparity is even greater. 73 percent of Latino adults are either ineligible for or cannot afford to take unpaid leave, compared to 60 percent of white adults.

The urgent need to prioritize paid leave has never been more clear as we continue to confront this dire pandemic and economic recession that has left millions of families reeling from acute health, caregiving, and financial challenges and has disproportionately impacted Latino and other families of color. Limited, emergency paid leave is now expired. The American Rescue Plan took a first step forward in providing voluntary tax credits for businesses who choose to provide it. Now we stand ready to work with you to enact meaningful and permanent paid family and medical leave so that it is finally a reality for working families in our communities.

The pandemic has created an acute crisis on top of a chronic emergency for the Latino community. We must take bold and aggressive steps to address the health and economic inequities that affect our communities. Passing a comprehensive, permanent federal paid family and medical leave policy will provide health and economic security for all families and will be vital to building back better. We look forward to working with you to achieve this goal.

Sincerely,



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz
Chairman
Congressional Hispanic Caucus

Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas
Member of Congress

Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress

Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

Teresa Leger Fernández
Member of Congress

Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress

Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress

CC: Speaker Nancy Pelosi
Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer
House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy
Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell